

Artist's Statement

by Greg Senn

My sculptural pieces are about ideas, ideas which rattle around in my head until they demand expression. Most of the content is introspective and deals with observation of and interaction with myself and the world around me. Seldom is the content readily available to the viewer, clues must be gleaned from titles or an artist provided explanation. I do not feel obligated to share my internal content as I believe that my work is able to stand on its own aesthetic merit. There has been a distinctly irreverent tongue in cheek quality which has surfaced in my work over the past twenty years. Some read this as sarcasm, however, the ideas grow out of personal joys as well as frustrations. I have a very dry sense of humor, and many of my pieces reflect this as well.

The focus of my work has gone from ceramics (I was trained a purist) to mixed media with a decided emphasis in metals. Working with metal (mostly steel) in a fashion to make it appear soft or to use it to make fabric which flows through one's hands has an element of ambiguity which fascinates me. Judging by comments and reactions I receive, others find the tactile stimulation just as fascinating as I do. The chainmaille pieces invite the viewer to handle them and watch them due to the ever-changing visual surface and the sensation caused by the metal. The wrought iron pieces are curvilinear for the most part and the paradigm is that steel is usually thought of as rectilinear and rigid. In actuality the wrought iron pieces are relatively fragile due to the dimensions of the metal and these pieces must be treated with some degree of sensitivity. The "symbolism" of the wrought iron pieces ranges from religious to genre type realism and incorporates Native American, Christian, southwestern, oriental, and traditional western influences. If commissions are any indication of appeal, the wrought iron and chainmaille pieces have struck a very responsive cord among viewers.

Sidelines of exploration over the past few years include: stone knapping because of its inherent beauty and historical import; HTML programming because it's the wave of future communication; computer art/graphics because it's fun and frustrating at the same time (I don't believe in the current existence of computer art but it is a whiz bang tool if one gets over one's phobia)(and there may come a time when art can be done on a computer...); stone carving because it's traditional as well as being fun; and of course all the various approaches to jewelry making. I often wish that I had more time for knapping because I thoroughly enjoy making what are called "eccentrics". These are non-traditional or atypical knapped pieces using traditional techniques. I've done skunks, camels, hearts, and birds and due to the shapes these prove to be very challenging and personally rewarding. My developing interest in cast iron seems to fit right in with the other long term interests I've had - I guess I am as eccentric as my work is! Recently I have begun to explore fused glass and lamp work. The heat and plastic quality of the material resembles the plasticity of steel at red heat, but is much faster and more direct.

